



State constitutional convention measures stoke partisan fear

By BECKY BOHRER and DAVID A. LIEB
Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — Simmering public anger in Alaska over the legislature's failure to settle the state's most radioactive issue — how big a check residents should receive from the state's oil wealth fund — is colliding with a once-a-decade opportunity for political activists: The chance for voters to call a convention to amend the state's constitution. The frustration over the long-festering oil check question is providing a tail wind for groups seeking to change the constitution to address a range of hot button topics, such as restricting abortion and altering the process for selecting judges in a way that opponents say could make the process more partisan. This year's political turbulence could turn what is usually an overlooked ballot question into a high-stakes fight over the direction of the state. A convention would open Alaska's foundational document to any type of revision, something opponents consider dangerous in an era of deep partisan divides, culture wars and campaigns fueled by deep-pocketed donors from out of state. Talking about changing the constitution is "like walking around in a dynamite storage room with a lighter. You better know what you're doing," said John Coghill, a conservative former state lawmaker whose father was one of the delegates to Alaska's original constitutional convention.



Katherine Hayes waves a flag and a sign urging Alaska lawmakers to fund a full oil wealth fund check, known locally as the PFD or Permanent Fund Dividend, Monday, July 8, 2019, in Wasilla, Alaska.

Associated Press

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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

SUNDAY:	MONDAY:	TUESDAY:	WEDNESDAY:	THURSDAY:	FRIDAY:	SATURDAY:
TICO KOCK STEEL DRUM 4 - 6pm	ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	JEAN PAUL SAXOPHONIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	CARLOS ORLATE SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm	MARRYBELL MADURO SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm	RICKY THOMAS GUITAR 7 - 9pm	ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm

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State constitutional convention measures stoke partisan fear

Alaska is one of three states where voters will decide this fall whether to call a convention to consider amendments to their constitution. The question has gained little attention in Missouri and has generated only mild interest so far in New Hampshire, where a group opposed to COVID-19 mandates and restrictions has discussed starting a campaign to advocate for a convention. That group, Rebuild NH, hasn't yet said what amendments it might favor. In all, 14 states are required to hold periodic elections asking voters whether to convene a constitutional convention. Delegates typically have free reign to propose revisions — or even entirely new constitu-



Demonstrators attended a press conference that turned into a rally against vaccine mandates outside the Statehouse, Tuesday, Sept. 14, 2021, in Concord, N.H.

Associated Press

are taking sides on the question that will be on the November ballot. This year's vote will follow an expected mid-year decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in a case that could severely erode abortion rights across the country. The Alaska Supreme Court has interpreted the state constitution's right to privacy as encompassing abortion rights, but many conservatives want to do away with that interpretation. The conservative Alaska Family Council says it considers calling for a convention one of its top priorities. It supports an amendment saying nothing in the constitution may be construed as protecting a right to abortion. The group also is supporting issues related to school choice and changes to the judicial selection process. Existing precedent in the state provides "pretty significant insulation" for Alaska women "to continue to have reproductive choice," said Susan Orlansky, interim executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Alaska. But she said her group is concerned about the potential for a convention. A convention carries the risk of possible changes to the constitution that could undermine those protections, she said.

A prominent advocate for a convention is Bob Bird, chair of the Alaskan Independence Party, which is one of the three recognized political parties in the state and considers itself a blend of conservative Republicanism, populism and libertarianism. Among other things, Bird has urged changes to the judiciary. Critics of a convention say the heated political environment makes this a bad time to open the state constitution, but Bird disagrees: "If we didn't have this environment, it wouldn't even be considered. It would be brushed off like it has (been) in the past." The last time the question was on the ballot in Alaska, in 2012, voters rejected calling for a convention by a nearly 2-to-1 margin. □

tions — that would then go back to voters for ratification. State constitutional conventions called by voters have become increasingly rare. More than 30 such ballot questions have failed since Rhode Island voters last authorized one in 1984. Voters in New Hampshire haven't authorized one since 1982. Delegates at that gathering debated more than 100 amendments, with 10 making it to the ballot. Voters approved six, including measures that required the legislature to meet annually instead of every other year and ensuring polling places would be accessible to disabled voters. The country is more divided today. "Whereas at one point a constitutional convention was seen as a way to empower the people and overcome challenges that they saw with the operation of government, the people now no longer have trust that constitutional conventions will work out," said John Dinan, a political science professor at Wake Forest University who studies the topic. "There's significant fear of runaway conventions or opening the Pandora's box of issues." That's what is emerging in Alaska, where some groups

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WED Cultural Dance Show

THU Acrobatic Show

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Time to retool census? Some think so after minorities missed

By MIKE SCHNEIDER

Associated Press

Is it time to rethink the census and other surveys that measure changes in the U.S. population?

Policymakers and demographers have been asking that question since results released by the U.S. Census Bureau this month showed Black, Hispanic, American Indian and other minority residents were undercounted at greater rates in 2020 than in the previous decade.

On the top of that, results from a version of its most comprehensive survey that compares year-to-year changes in U.S. life had to be mostly scrapped because disruptions caused by the pandemic produced fewer responses in 2020.

"The current model of coming up with a master address list, mailing everybody an invitation — like you're inviting people to a party and hoping they respond, and if not, you're going to track them down — I think it's an obsolete system," said Arturo Vargas, CEO of NALEO Educational Fund, a nonpartisan nonprofit that supports Latino political engagement.

The undercounts in the 2020 census were blamed on the pandemic, natural disasters and political interference from the Trump administration, but



Census Bureau Director nominee Robert Santos, testifies before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs committee, Thursday, July 15, 2021, on Capitol Hill in Washington. Associated Press

undercounts of racial and ethnic minorities are nothing new to the census; they've been persistent for decades. In recent years, the cost of censuses and surveys have grown while public participation rates for surveys have declined. The bureau's biggest between-census effort to take the measure of the U.S. population, the American Community Survey, produces 11 billion statistics from interviews with 3.5 million households each year, and the once-a-decade census tallies every U.S. resident for a count used in divvying up federal funding and congressional seats among the states as well as redrawing political districts. "What we have today largely is still a 20th century, survey-centric statistical

system," Ron Jarmin, the chief operating officer of the Census Bureau, said last December when he was serving as the agency's acting director.

Even before the release of the 2020 report card earlier this month, the Census Bureau had been developing new ways of gathering data. Chief among them is the embryonic Frames Program that would combine all kinds of data sets, including administrative records from the private sector and government agencies, as well as surveys and censuses that have been staples of Census Bureau data-gathering for decades. Under the concept, one data set such as an individual's IRS file would be linked to another, such as the individual's Census Bureau sur-

vey response. Eventually, data related to people's addresses, demographics, businesses and jobs would all be linked together.

In 2030, when the next census takes place, the program could help count people with good administrative records or links to other records, and more resources could be devoted toward households that are the hardest to count, Census Bureau Director Robert Santos said in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

"We are looking to take advantage of existing technology, and that necessarily includes the merging of large databases on people, not to create a Big Brother society, but to supplement and reduce the burden on our population when it comes time to gather data," said Santos, who was appointed by President Joe Biden.

Relying on administrative records may have its own problems because some groups, such as people in the country illegally, often have little paper trail.

Besides naming an unusually high number of political appointees to the Census Bureau, the Trump administration unsuccessfully attempted to use administrative records to get a tally of the number of people in the country illegally so they could be eliminated from

the count used for allocating congressional seats.

Any effort to revamp how the count is conducted will need to be protected from similar efforts to misuse the count for political purposes, said Paul Ong, a professor emeritus of urban studies at UCLA.

"The 2020 enumeration was a wakeup call," Ong said. "The Census Bureau has a very important and fundamental function in our society. It is the keeper of our demographic truths."

From a purely civic perspective, Terri Ann Lowenthal, a former congressional staffer who specializes in census issues, worries a greater reliance on administrative records at the expense of public participation will be one less thing that engages everyone in the U.S., no matter their background.

"If you are in a millionaire's mansion or living in a tent under a bridge, you matter to the census," Lowenthal said.

The Census Bureau has been at the forefront of advances in data gathering and processing — whether using punch cards and electronic tabulators at the end of the 19th century or employing the first modern computer installed by a civilian government agency for the 1950 census. For the 2020 census, it tried several new approaches. □

Former Apple employee charged with defrauding \$10 million

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — A former Apple employee has been charged with defrauding the tech giant out of more than \$10 million by taking kickbacks, stealing equipment and laundering money, federal prosecutors said.

Dhirendra Prasad, 52, worked for 10 years as a buyer in Apple's Global Service Supply Chain department.

A federal criminal case unsealed Friday alleges that he exploited his position to defraud the company in several schemes, including

stealing parts and causing the company to pay for items and services it never received.

A court has allowed the federal government to seize five real estate properties and financial accounts worth about \$5 million from Prasad, and the government is seeking to keep those assets as proceeds of crime, the U.S. Attorney's office in San Jose said in a news release.

Prasad is scheduled to appear in court next Thursday to answer to charges of engaging in a conspiracy to

commit fraud, money laundering and tax evasion. It's unclear whether he has retained a lawyer. A phone number listed for him was disconnected.

Two owners of vendor companies that did business with Apple have admitted to conspiring with Prasad to commit fraud and launder money, prosecutors said.

Prasad is scheduled to make a first appearance in U.S. District Court in San Jose next week on Thursday. Fraud, money laundering and tax evasion each carry maximum sentences of five



An Apple logo is seen in raindrops on a window outside an Apple Store at the Country Club Plaza shopping district in Kansas City, Mo., on Dec. 26, 2018.

Associated Press

to 20 years, but sentencing guidelines and judges' discretion mean most people

convicted of fraud in federal court receive less than the maximum sentence. □

Judge: Same-sex marriage license denials violated rights

By JONATHAN MATTISE
Associated Press

A federal judge has ruled that a former Kentucky clerk violated the constitutional rights of two same-sex couples who were among those to whom she wouldn't issue marriage licenses — a refusal that sparked international attention and briefly landed her in jail in 2015.

U.S. District Judge David Bunning in Ashland issued the ruling Friday in two long-standing lawsuits involving Kim Davis, the former clerk of Rowan County, and two same-sex couples who sued her. With the decision, a jury trial will still need to take place to decide on any damages the couples could be owed.

Bunning reasoned that Davis "cannot use her own constitutional rights as a shield to violate the constitutional rights of others while performing her duties as an elected official."

"It is readily apparent that Obergefell recognizes Plaintiffs' Fourteenth Amendment right to marry," the judge wrote, referencing the landmark same-sex marriage Obergefell decision. "It is also readily apparent that Davis made a conscious decision to vio-



In this Nov. 6, 2018, file photo, Kim Davis, the county clerk for Rowan County in Kentucky, works with the county election board on Election Day, in Morehead, Ky.

Associated Press

late Plaintiffs' right."

Soon after the 2015 Supreme Court decision in which same-sex couples won the right to marry nationwide, Davis, a Christian who has a religious objection to same-sex marriage, stopped issuing all marriage licenses.

That led to lawsuits against her, and a judge ordered Davis to issue the licenses. She was sued by gay and straight couples, and spent five days in jail over her

refusal. She was released only after her staff issued the licenses on her behalf but removed her name from the form. The state legislature later enacted a law removing the names of all county clerks from state marriage licenses.

Davis, a Republican, ultimately lost her bid for reelection in 2018. Democrat Elwood Caudill Jr. is now the county's clerk.

Davis had argued that a legal doctrine called quali-

fied immunity protected her from being sued for damages by couples David Ermold and David Moore as well as James Yates and Will Smith. The U.S. Supreme Court in October 2020 left in place a decision that allowed the lawsuit to move forward, declining to take the case.

Michael Gartland, an attorney for the plaintiffs in the case, told WKYT-TV "they couldn't be more happy that they're finally going to

get their day in court and they're confident justice will be served."

Liberty Counsel, the law firm that represents Davis, said the case could return to the Supreme Court.

The group pointed to comments on the 2020 ruling by Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, when he wrote for himself and Justice Samuel Alito.

Thomas wrote that while he agreed with the decision not to hear the Davis case regarding the immunity claims in 2020, it was a "stark reminder of the consequences" of the court's 2015 decision in the same-sex marriage case.

Because of that case, he wrote, "those with sincerely held religious beliefs concerning marriage will find it increasingly difficult to participate in society without running afoul" of the case "and its effect on other antidiscrimination laws."

"Kim Davis is entitled to protection to an accommodation based on her sincere religious belief," said Mat Staver, Liberty Counsel founder and chairman. "This case raises serious First Amendment free exercise of religion claims and has a high potential of reaching the Supreme Court." □



Crime scene tape lies on the ground, Sunday, March 20, 2022 at the scene where a shooting that left over 20 injured and one dead occurred Saturday night in Dumas, Ark.

Associated Press

DUMAS, Ark. (AP) — One person was killed and 24 others wounded when gunfire erupted during a car show that is part of an annual community event in a small southeast Arkansas town, authorities said Sunday. Police have not

said what led to Saturday night's shooting in Dumas, but Gov. Asa Hutchinson said on Twitter that there were two suspects, one of whom had been arrested and was being held on unrelated charges.

At least six children were

Gunfire at Arkansas car show leaves 1 dead, 24 wounded

among those wounded.

"As the investigation continues I will examine details to see if there are any steps that could have been taken to prevent this type of tragedy," Hutchinson said. Dumas is a city of about 4,000 located about 90 miles (144 kilometers) south of Little Rock. The car show is part of a community event held each spring called Hood-Nic, which is short for neighborhood picnic. The Hood-Nic Foundation says on its website that its mission is to "rebuild, reunite, and respond to the needs of the youth in our communities."

The event, which helps raise funds for scholarships and school supplies, also in-

cluded a bonfire, a basketball tournament, musical performances, a teen party and a balloon release.

"The purpose of Hood-Nic has always been to bring the community together," the foundation said on its Facebook page. "This senseless violence needs to end." Six children who were wounded by gunfire were taken to Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock, according to a spokeswoman. Most had been released as of Sunday afternoon.

Messages left at a hospital in Dumas and another in nearby McGehee were not immediately returned.

Wallace McGehee, the car show's organizer, ex-

pressed condolences to the victims' families and the community.

"For something like this to happen, it's a tragedy," McGehee told KATV. "We did this here for 16 years without a problem."

Chris Jones, a Democrat running for Arkansas governor, tweeted that was at the event earlier Saturday, registering voters and enjoying "a positive family atmosphere."

"I am deeply saddened (and honestly angered) by this tragedy," Jones said in a statement.

Hutchinson said that the man who was arrested was from Jacksonville, which is just northeast of Little Rock. □

Yemen rebels launch barrage of strikes on Saudi sites

By ISABEL DEBRE

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Yemen's Houthi rebels unleashed one of their most intense barrages of drone and missile strikes on Saudi Arabia's critical energy facilities on Sunday, sparking a fire at one site and temporarily cutting oil production at another.

The salvo marked a serious escalation of rebel attacks on the kingdom as the war in Yemen rages into its eighth year and peace talks stall.

The attacks did not cause casualties, the Saudi-led military coalition fighting in Yemen said, but struck sites belonging to one of the world's most important energy companies and damaged civilian vehicles and homes. The coalition also said it destroyed a remotely piloted boat packed with explosives dispatched by the Houthis in the busy southern Red Sea.

Hours after oil giant Aramco's CEO Amin H. Nasser told reporters the attacks had no impact on oil supplies, the Saudi energy ministry acknowledged that a drone strike targeting the Yanbu Aramco Sinopec Refining Company caused "a temporary reduction in the refinery's production." The disruption, as oil prices spike in an already-tight energy market, "will be compensated for from the



In this photo provided by the Saudi Press Agency, a damaged car is parked at an Aramco terminal in the southern border town of Jizan, Saudi Arabia, Sunday, March 20, 2022.

Associated Press

inventory," the ministry said, without elaborating.

Another aerial attack later in the day struck a fuel tank at an Aramco distribution station in the port city of Jiddah and ignited a fire. The relentless wave of strikes revealed the expanding reach and precision of the rebels and the persistent gaps in the kingdom's air defenses. A sophisticated strike in 2019 on Aramco oil facilities knocked out half the kingdom's oil production and threatened to ig-

nite a regional crisis — an attack that the U.S. and Riyadh later alleged came from Iran.

The attacks on Sunday came as Saudi Arabia's state-backed Aramco, the world's largest oil company, announced its profits surged 124% in 2021 to \$110 billion, a jump fueled by renewed anxieties about global supply shortages and soaring oil prices.

Aramco, also known as the Saudi Arabian Oil Co., released its annual earnings

after weeks of intense volatility in energy markets triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The international oil benchmark Brent crude spiked over \$107 on Sunday after nearly hitting a peak of \$140 earlier this month. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have so far resisted Western appeals to increase oil production to offset the loss of Russian oil as gasoline prices skyrocket.

Yehia Sarie, a spokesman

for Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis, said the rebels had launched "a wide and large military operation" in retaliation for the Saudi-led "aggression and blockade" that has turned much of Yemen into a wasteland. The escalation followed a flurry of diplomacy over the weekend in Oman's capital of Muscat. The U.N. special envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, met with the chief Houthi negotiator and Omani officials to discuss "a possible truce during the holy month of Ramadan" in early April, the U.N. mission said.

The White House condemned the attacks, blaming Iran for supplying the Houthis with missile and drone parts, as well as training and expertise.

"It is time to bring this war to a close, but that can only happen if the Houthis agree to cooperate with the United Nations," said U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan. "The United States stands fully behind those efforts."

The Saudi-led military coalition reported aerial strikes on a range of facilities: an Aramco liquefied gas plant in the Red Sea port of Yanbu, an oil storage plant in Jiddah, a desalination facility in Al-Shaqeeq on the Red Sea coast and an Aramco oil facility in the southern border town of Jizan, among others. □

Car runs into Carnival revelers in Belgium, killing 6

By RAF CASERT

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — A car slammed at high speed into Carnival revelers in a small town in southern Belgium early Sunday, killing six people and leaving 10 more with life-threatening injuries, authorities said, adding many others were lightly injured.

"What should have been a great party turned into a tragedy," said Belgian Interior Minister Annelies Verlinden. The prosecutor's office, which gave the death toll, also said two lo-

cal people in their thirties were arrested at the scene in Strépy-Bracquegnies, 50 kilometers (30 miles) south of Brussels. Prosecutors said, in the early stages of their investigation, there were no elements to suspect a terror motive.

In an age-old tradition, Carnival revelers had gathered at dawn, intending to pick up others at their homes along the way, to finally hold their famous festivity again after it was banned for the past two years to counter the spread of COVID-19. Some dressed in

colorful garb with bells attached, walking behind the beat of drums. It was supposed to be a day of deliverance.

Instead, said mayor Jacques Gobert, "what happened turned it into a national catastrophe."

More than 150 people of all ages had gathered around 5 a.m. and were standing in a thick crowd along a long, straight road. Suddenly, "a car drove from the back at high speed. And we have a few dozen injured and unfortunately several people who are killed," Gobert



Gilles de Binche performers and people talk on a street, after an incident at a carnival, in Strépy-Bracquegnies, Belgium, Sunday, March 20, 2022.

Associated Press

said. The driver and a second person were arrested when

their car came to a halt a few hundred meters (yards) further on. □

S. Korea's next leader to abandon Blue House for new office

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM**

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)

— South Korea's incoming president said Sunday he will abandon the mountain-side presidential palace of Blue House and establish his office at the Defense Ministry compound in central Seoul to better communicate with the public.

The plan drew an immediate backlash from critics of the relocation plan, who warned that a hasty movement of top government offices would undermine South Korea's national security, require excessive spending and violate property rights of residents in the new presidential office area.

Relocating the presidential office was one of President-elect Yoon Suk Yeol's main campaign promises. The conservative former top prosecutor whose single five-year term begins on May 10 said the location and design of the Blue House have fed criticism that South Korean leaders are cut off from the public and wield excessive power. At the Blue House compound, offices for presidential advisers and the press room are not in the same building where the president works and are hundreds of meters (yards) apart. Some former officials said they sometimes used



The presidential Blue House is seen in Seoul, South Korea on March 10, 2017.

Associated Press

bicycles or cars to visit the president.

Yoon told a televised news conference Sunday that he chose the Defense Ministry compound because it's already equipped with security-related command facilities. He said his team dropped other sites because of inconveniences to the public by presidential security.

Yoon said he'll begin his term at the new office. He said Defense Ministry officials would be moved to the Joint Chiefs of Staff building at the compound, and that JCS personnel would be moved in phases to a war command center on the outskirts of Seoul.

Yoon said a massive public park will be set up near

the new presidential office and ordinary citizens will be able to look at his office at a close distance. He said he also plans to establish a press center and meet journalists frequently.

According to Yoon's plans, the current Blue House will be open to the public as a park on his inauguration day. He said he'll collect public opinions to choose the name of the new office.

Critics of Yoon's plan have called on him not to rush the relocation, saying other tasks require more urgent attention, such as surging COVID-19 cases, the North Korean nuclear threat and diverse economic woes.

Yun Ho-jung, a leader of the liberal Democratic

Party, the biggest political party in South Korea, said the relocation would cause "a big hole in national security" amid North Korean threats because of the hasty movement of key facilities at the Defense Ministry compound. He said some Seoul residents will also likely suffer "immense damage" in their property rights because of expected government-imposed restrictions on developments in the areas near the new office.

"Is it appropriate to unilaterally push for the relocation of the Blue House and the Defense Ministry, which would determine national security and citizens' property rights, without asking the public opinions?" Yun

said. He urged the president-elect to cancel the relocation.

A group of 11 former heads of the Joint Chiefs of Staff conveyed to Yoon's transition team a statement opposing the relocation. They said it would allow the enemy to strike the presidential office and military headquarters simultaneously, according to South Korean media.

Outgoing liberal President Moon Jae-in, a Democratic Party member, had earlier also promised to move out of the Blue House but canceled the plans after failing to find a site for the new office.

Yoon said he was aware of concerns but said if he starts his term at the Blue House, which critics have called "a symbol of imperial power," it will become harder to move out.

"I know relocating the presidential office isn't an easy thing. But if I back down on a promise with the people (on the relocation) again, no other future president would attempt to do it," Yoon said. "I've made this decision for the future of the country."

Yoon said the relocation would cost about 50 billion won (\$41 million). Some critics earlier said it would cost up to 1 trillion won (\$825 million), an estimate Yoon called "groundless." □



Mostafa Waziri, Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, displays a small statue at a tomb decorated with hieroglyphic inscriptions at a recently discovered tomb near the famed Step Pyramid, in Saqqara, south of Cairo, Egypt, Saturday, March 19, 2022.

Associated Press

By **SAMY MAGDY**

Associated Press

CAIRO (AP)

— Egypt on Saturday displayed recently discovered, well-deco-

rated ancient tombs at a Pharaonic necropolis just outside the capital Cairo.

The five tombs were unearthed earlier this month

Egypt displays recently discovered ancient tombs in Saqqara

and date back to the Old Kingdom — a period spanning roughly from around 2700 BC to 2200 B.C., as well as to the First Intermediate Period, which lasted for over a century after the Old Kingdom collapsed, according to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

Mostafa Waziri, secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, said Egyptian archeologists started excavating the site in September. The tombs, he said, were for senior officials including regional rulers and palace supervisors in ancient Egypt. "All of

those five tombs are well-painted, well-decorated. Excavations did not stop. We are planning to continue our excavations. We believe that we can find more tombs in this area," he told reporters at the site.

The tombs were found near the Step Pyramid of Djoser, in the Saqqara Necropolis, 24 kilometers (15 miles) southwest of Cairo.

Footage shared on the ministry's social media pages showed burial shafts leading to the tombs. Walls were seen decorated with hieroglyphic inscriptions and images of sacred ani-

mals and after-life items used by ancient Egyptians. The Saqqara site is part of a sprawling necropolis at Egypt's ancient capital of Memphis that includes the famed Giza Pyramids as well as smaller pyramids at Abu Sir, Dahshur and Abu Ruwaysh. The ruins of Memphis were designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1970s.

In recent years, Egypt has heavily promoted new archaeological finds to international media and diplomats in the hope of attracting more tourists to the country. □





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Urban mining transforms Brazil neighborhoods into ghost town

By ERALDO PERES

Associated Press

MACEIO, Brazil (AP) — This

part of Maceio, the capital of Brazil's northeastern Alagoas state, used to buzz with the sounds of cars, commerce and children playing. It went silent as residents evacuated en masse, eager to escape the looming destruction of their homes, which were cracking and crumbling.

Beneath their floors, the subsurface was riddled with dozens of cavities: the legacy of four decades of rock salt mining in five urban neighborhoods. That caused the soil above to settle and structures atop it to start coming apart. Since 2020, the communities have hollowed out as tens of thousands of residents accepted payouts from petrochemical company Braskem to relocate.

Few holdouts remain, several of whom told The Associated Press they imagine the ground under their feet resembling Swiss cheese. Still, Paulo Sergio Doe, 51, said he will never leave his home in the Pinheiro neighborhood where he grew up.

"The company can't impose what it wants overnight to do away with the lives and histories of so many families," he said in an interview outside his home.

Braskem is one of the biggest petrochemical companies in the Americas,



Paulo Sergio Doe visits abandoned homes in the Pinheiro neighborhood of Maceio, Alagoas state, Brazil, Sunday, March 6, 2022.

Associated Press

owned primarily by Brazilian state-run oil company Petrobras and construction giant Novonor, formerly known as Odebrecht.

The company isn't forcibly evicting anyone, though those still here said it feels that way. It reached an agreement with prosecutors and public defenders to compensate families so they could uproot and start over elsewhere. By Braskem's count, 97.4% of affected homes — more than 14,000 — are now vacant, the company said in its 2021 earnings call on Thursday.

The 55,000 evacuees left behind not just neighbors and friends, but also jobs; 4,500 mostly small- and medium-sized businesses that sustained 30,000 people were shuttered, according to a study The Federal University of Alagoas pub-

lished last year. Among those businesses were local supermarkets and a ballet school that operated for 38 years, according to Adriana Capretz, part of the university's work group to monitor the neighborhoods.

The exodus is evident from above; departing residents salvaged everything they could sell for extra cash, including their roof tiles. Their removal allows unimpeded views inside the once-occupied spaces.

The amount Braskem offered wasn't enough for Natalícia Gonçalves. The retired teacher, 77, also said she felt too old to start fresh. So she watched as everyone in Pinheiro left her. Now she lives inside a makeshift fortress behind boards and plants aimed at deterring would-be burglars. Braskem security

guards do rounds on motorcycles, briefly interrupting the evenings' eerie silence.

"They've already done everything to force me to go, but I have my rights," she said from behind her home's fortified exterior. "I'm afraid, especially at night when no one is around. The light is dim, there's hardly any. I protect myself with my plants, but I'm alone, with God."

Braskem has so far disbursed about 40% of the more than 5 billion reais (about \$1 billion) it has set aside for relocation, compensation of individuals including residents and local employees and the transfer of facilities like schools and hospitals, the company said in its earnings call. It is directing 6 billion reais more for closing and monitoring the salt mines, as well as social, environmental and urbanistic measures. Wrapping up the call, Braskem's CEO Roberto Lopes Pontes Simões highlighted the company's year, including "all the advance we had in Maceio" in having relocated nearly everyone from the neighborhoods.

No house has been swallowed by the earth, nor was any person killed. Capretz, a professor in the university's architecture and urbanism school, said that doesn't mean heartache was avoided.

"The tragedy is happening,

not just regarding the geological phenomena but, primarily, because there are cases of people who committed suicide, many who became sick with depression, lost their social lives, family ties, friends and neighbors," Capretz said as she walked through the Bebedouro neighborhood. "None of that is being considered by Braskem."

The company's press office said in a lengthy response to AP questions that it provides free psychological consultations to any residents participating in the compensation and relocation program.

It said the program was created based on law and legal rulings in similar cases and said compensation offers are always presented to individuals alongside their lawyer or a public defender.

But negotiations can be clouded by sentiment; the price of a house isn't the same as the value of a home.

Quitéria Maria da Silva, 64, and her grandson were waiting for the rest of their family to come play dominos on a table they set up beneath the only lamp-post on their street that's still functional. Even as da Silva said she would move were Braskem to pay her requested amount, she expressed ambivalence:

"I always lived in my house and now, if I have to leave here, where will I go?" □

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PALM BEACH — MedCare's Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Centers has improved its services when it comes to turn around time for results. As of November its offering same day test results (previously it was 24 hours) on both PCR and Antigen tests.

This in part is to comply with the updated December 6, CDC requirement for travel to the United States, where all air passengers, regardless of vaccination status, must show a negative COVID-19 test taken no more than 1 day before travel to the United States.

MedCare Fit2Fly Testing Center at the Cove Mall is opposite the Holiday Inn and is open every day for walk-ins from 8 AM through 6 PM. MedCare's other location is situated at The Courtyard by Marriott Aruba Resort, is across the street from the RIU Hotel and is open every day from 8:00 AM until 2 PM. These two locations are at a stone's throw from your resort, condominium, or other vacation accommodation. Walk-ins are welcome.

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The Aruban Elliott (Lefty) Loonstra places 7th in the world rankings and 1st in the Pan American Region

Our male K 44 -80KG Para Taekwondo Athlete and Paralympic Athlete Elliott Loonstra once again is putting Aruba's name on top.

the Pan American region (American continent, North, Center, Caribbean and South).

Elliott Loonstra PLY

The Para Taekwondo world ranking was recently published in March 2022, where Aruba is in the seventh position in the world ranking and in the first position in

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has recognized Elliott Loonstra for his contribution to the Paralympic Movement through his hard work,



commitment and promotion of Paralympic values. Post-nominal letters, such as PhD or MD, are placed after a person's name to indicate office, honor, or fraternity membership. Thus, PLY can be added next to the Paralympic athlete's

name on official documentation, social media, resumes, business cards, presentations, email signatures, or anywhere else their name is used.

In the near Future

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participate in a free Martial Arts self-defense class at Onehealthydayaruba.com, on Sunday, March 20, 2022, from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM at BodyZone Aruba and at Paseo Herencia from 6:00 PM to 6:30 PM, for more information +297 630 47 43, luciano.Mazzeo@ArubaParalympic.org

Ten graduates of the Social Formation Trajectory SVT



ORANJESTAD – On March 9, 2022, the ten graduates of the social formation trajectory received their certificate of the program SVT.

The Minister of Justice and Social Affairs, Mr. Rocco Tjon, congratulated the 10 graduates for their accomplishments through a virtual video call. The SVT program has a great added value thanks to the collaboration of the Government of Aruba with the Government of the Netherlands.

These SVT participants have completed extensive training in which they received training in different disciplines, including military training. As part of the SVT program, the candidates did their internships at various entities and companies. It gave them practical experience and increased their opportunity of getting a job and entering the labor market. □




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Paseo Herencia

New beginnings after the kitchen table and beyond with new restaurant: Infini by Chef Urvin Croes

PALM BEACH — After spearheading The Kitchen Table for five years, receiving notable recognitions in USA Today, The Daily Meal and earning the #1 spot on TripAdvisor's list of Fine Dining Restaurants in the Caribbean, Chef Urvin Croes has now moved on to higher heights. Infini, his new chef's table, which opened at the Blue Residences in November 2020, allows the Michelin-trained Aruban culinary artist to create gastronomic experiences unconfined by cultural or regional expectations. The former The Kitchen Table space has since been renovated into a suitable culinary studio to host this vision. In describing these changes, Croes says: "We opened up the entire kitchen and elevated the dining tables so guests have a front row stadium-like view of each step of the preparations. The spotlights, which we carefully choreograph, follow the plates' transition from blank canvas into culinary works of art."

"It is a flavor that you cannot define, but you can create."

He had been sitting on the first menu for over a year. Inspired by umami, one of the five basic tastes, and also Japanese for "essence of deliciousness", Chef Croes strived to organically produce this palate in each dish of the eight-course Chef's Impression. "It is a flavor that

you cannot define, but you can create. Take our popular langoustine for example; we combined elements that are rarely paired together: the bitter, sour and salty flavors of the lemon cream, kombucha, green grapes, watercress and achiote, fused with the sweet and delicate taste of the langoustine induce ultimate umami."

After hosting the first menu for three months, the Executive Chef introduced a second tour de force in February 2021 — this time a pescatarian menu dedicated to Lent, of which Croes has to say: "I wanted to focus on the finest fish in the world, they are the protagonists of this season." Visitors can experience the second Chef's Impression until May 2021, at which point Croes and his team will reveal exciting new flavors for the summer.

"Without a great team, there is no great chef"

"There is very little I can do by myself. Without a great team, there is no great chef", says Croes, while raving about the six young professionals sharing his kitchen. All graduates of Aruba's EPI College and familiar faces to the Chef as each one has completed their culinary internship under his guidance. In fact, Infini's Chef de Cuisine, Ashwin Maduro, was Urvin's very first student, before relocating to Amsterdam, where he worked at several Michelin-starred restaurants, including &moshik (formally &Samhoud Places). Having recently returned to Aruba, Chef Maduro is thrilled to be reunited with his first mentor and hopes to secure Aruba's space on the global map of unique culinary experiences. Similarly, after four years working in the two-Michelin starred restaurant Spectrum, Chef de Partie Moises Ramirez returned home to share his vast experience in formulating recipes with meticulous attention to detail and consistency. Further down the kitchen line, Chef de Partie Alvaro Yi, who has worked at the two-Michelin starred FG Restaurant, is all about expressing himself through cooking and plating to create art that you can eat. Mixologist Marc-Anthony Rannis brings eight years of experience in the fine dining industry to Infini. His fine craftsmanship is displayed in the unparalleled wine pairings and signature cocktails, which include his personally



homemade syrups, garnishes and fresh local ingredients. Maître D' and Junior Sommelier Jessica Theysen, who previously managed renowned Chef Dennis Huwaë's Restaurant Daalder in Amsterdam, is a true storyteller. From the moment she serves the Salinity welcome drink and the culinary tale begins, she takes you on an adventure around the world to discover never-before-tasted combinations. Then, towards the end of the night, it is his time to shine — Pastry Chef Jean-Claude Werleman, that is. After spending the last two years perfecting his recipes in the Pastry Department of the Ritz Carlton Aruba, Werleman joins Infini to continue exploring his passion for experimenting with colors and bold flavors.

"It's time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own"

"The goal is to leave our visitors speechless. The look on their faces whenever they take the first bite says it all and it is priceless", shares Croes, with a smile. Reclaiming the spot of number one restaurant in the Caribbean is also in sight, but this time he will not stop there. "In the end, we want Aruba to be recognized for its culinary mastery. We have trained the best culinary artists right here on the island and they have proven themselves internationally in the most renowned kitchens in the world. Now it is time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own. Who knows where that will take us; hopefully to infinity and beyond."

Infini located at Blue Residences currently serves an eight-course Chef's Impression to up to 21 guests starting at 6:30PM. To make reservations visit www.infiniaruba.com or call +297-699-3982. □



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www.infiniaruba.com

Labor foe Schultz returns as Starbucks union effort grows

By DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Business Writer

From the time he bought Starbucks in 1987 to the time he stepped down as chairman in 2018, Howard Schultz consistently — and successfully — fought attempts to unionize Starbucks' U.S. stores and roasting plants.

But Schultz — who was recently named Starbucks' interim chief executive — never confronted a unionization movement as big and fast-growing as the current one. Six U.S. Starbucks stores have voted to unionize since December, and at least 140 more in 27 states have filed petitions for union elections.

It's unclear how Schultz will tackle the issue when he returns to the company in April.

"He took it really personally that his workers wanted to be part of a union, because he thought with him in charge they wouldn't need it," said Pam Blauman-Schmitz, a retired union representative who worked to organize Starbucks' first stores in the early 1980s. "He would say stuff like, 'Maybe you need unions in the coal mines, but not at Starbucks stores.'" Starbucks announced March 16 that its CEO of five years, Kevin Johnson, was retiring. The company tapped Schultz to serve as interim CEO until it finds a permanent replacement by this fall. Schultz, 68, who has held the honorary title of chairman emeritus since 2018, is also rejoining the company's board.

It is not yet clear if Schultz will try to amp up the fight against unionization. But Timothy Hubbard, assistant professor of management at the University of Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business, said he is well-positioned to do so.

"My sense is that if they want to shut down the unions, this is the best course of action," Hubbard said. "Schultz has what it takes to tackle a hard topic like unions."

Schultz did not respond to attempts to contact him through his website or his



Pam Blauman-Schmitz, who was a union rep at Starbucks in the mid-1980's, poses for a photo in front of a Starbucks coffee shop Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022, in Seattle.

Associated Press

family's foundation.

In a November letter to employees, posted just before the first unionization votes at three stores in Buffalo, New York, Schultz said he tried to create the kind of company that his blue-collar father never had the chance to work for.

He recalled the "traumatic moment" his family had no income after his father suffered a workplace injury, and said that's why Starbucks has benefits like health care, free college tuition, parental leave and stock grants for employees. "No partner has ever needed to have a representative seek to obtain things we all have as partners at Starbucks. And I am saddened and concerned to hear anyone thinks that is needed now," Schultz wrote. But to many union organizers, who complain of inconsistent hours, poor training, understaffing and low wages, Schultz's words fell flat.

"A lot of people felt like they were being lectured to by a disappointed father because they weren't grateful," said Jaz Brisack, a

Starbucks barista and labor organizer who heard Schultz speak at an employee forum in Buffalo last fall.

Others say they've seen outright anger from Schultz over unions.

Blauman-Schmitz said as soon as Schultz bought Starbucks in 1987, he reneged on a labor agreement that had been reached between the company and the United Food and Commercial Workers union, which represented six Seattle-area stores and a roasting plant. Schultz wanted a new contract with weaker benefits and job protections, said Blauman-Schmitz, who has since retired from the union.

One day, she said, Schultz spotted her passing out flyers in the roasting plant and rushed toward her, screaming and red in the face.

Anne Belov was working part-time in the roasting plant and sat on the union negotiating committee. She had always gotten glowing performance reviews, but after Schultz took over, she was suddenly being reprimanded constantly. Belov left the company

in 1988.

"You could see the writing on the wall. As the company grew, it was not going to continue to be possible to act on the good faith of the people who controlled all the power," she said.

Schultz soon swept the union out. In his 1997 book, "Pour Your Heart Into It," he recalled how a barista who opposed the union began a campaign to decertify it. By 1992, the union no longer represented the stores or the roasting plant. Schultz saw that as a sign that workers trusted him.

"If they had faith in me and my motives, they wouldn't need a union," he wrote.

Still, efforts to unionize Starbucks didn't go away, and the company continued to fight them. Starbucks had to reinstate fired workers or pay to settle labor law violations numerous times in the early 2000s.

Last year, the NLRB found that Starbucks unlawfully retaliated against two Philadelphia baristas who were attempting to unionize. The NLRB said Starbucks monitored the employees' social media, unlawfully

spied on their conversations and ultimately fired them. It ordered Starbucks to stop interfering with workers' right to organize and offer reinstatement to the two workers.

More recently, on March 15, the NLRB issued a complaint against Starbucks alleging that district and store managers in Phoenix spied on and threatened workers who supported unionizing. The complaint says Starbucks suspended one union supporter and fired another.

Starbucks did not make anyone available to comment. In a letter to employees in December, Starbucks North America President Rossann Williams said the company will respect the legal process and bargain in good faith. But the company insists its stores function better when it works directly with employees.

The outcome of the current unionizing effort is unclear. The number of stores that have petitioned for union elections is still only a fraction of Starbucks' 9,000 company-owned stores in the U.S. And Starbucks has the resources to keep fighting, with annual revenue of \$29 billion last year.

But Brisack said this unionizing effort is also stronger than past ones, which were thwarted by high worker turnover and resource-starved unions. Organizers now have the backing of Workers United — an arm of the 2 million-member Service Employees International Union — and a union-friendly president in the White House. Brisack said the pandemic also fueled workers' outrage.

The climate is also changing. Dan Cornfield, a labor expert and professor of sociology at Vanderbilt, said U.S. polling shows growing public support for unions since the Great Recession. That's a big difference from the 1980s, when Starbucks first fought back unions.

"By taking an anti-union stand from the Reagan era, they are actually potentially jeopardizing their customer base," Cornfield said. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 42 Stagger-

1 Showed sudden interest

6 Baby bull

10 Genetic twin

11 Wiped out, in skiing slang

13 Chopper part

14 Runway sight

15 Cry of insight

16 Employ

18 Sprinted

19 California resort city

22 Supporter's vote

23 Part to play

24 Fails miserably

27 Casual eateries

28 Diva's song

29 — au vin (chicken dish)

30 Moves by cheerleaders

35 — loss (confused)

36 Fellow

37 Cereal bit

38 Telegraphy pioneer

40 Musical set in Argentina

43 Stair part

44 RBI or ERA

45 Garden starters

DOWN

1 Throw away

2 Honolulu hello

3 Add up

4 First numero

5 Reads

6 Bank job

7 Georgia airport code

8 Find out about

9 Obtain through

trickery

12 Past and present

17 Mud bath site

20 "Oops, sorry!"

21 Baghdad native

24 Grand — (Atlantic island)

25 Good speakers

26 Mosque tower

27 Traps, in a way

29 Tax-time asst.

31 Refine ore

32 Racket

33 Like some communities

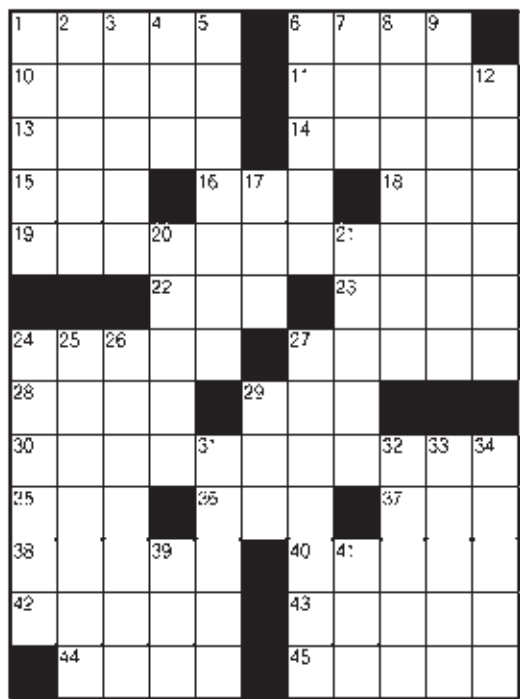
34 Flag features

39 Yacht spot

41 Compete



Saturday's answer



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-21

CRYPTOQUOTE

J P Q M D K Q M J K ' S M U M I K M S M R

Y J Q Y H O Y J J K V K Q G P J J K U I M

D T K I I N J U M X P B M U B M Y C X Y J D .

— I M Z K J W Y B B P I I

Saturday's Cryptoquote: I NEVER MAKE STUPID MISTAKES. ONLY VERY, VERY CLEVER ONES. — JOHN PEEL

Producers Guild presidents to end trying, triumphant tenure

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP Film Writer

Gail Berman and Lucy Fisher were both Hollywood veterans when they were elected as co-presidents of the Producers Guild of America in June 2018. But while both had overseen big studios, films and television shows, nothing could have prepared them for what they'd encounter in their four years in office with the PGA, including the #MeToo revolution, the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We didn't know each other when this shotgun marriage was formed," Berman said. "But we sort of joined hands and said, 'let's try our best to move this forward.' And we've had the best time with each other. It was definitely more than we ever considered when we said yes, but I will say that we're leaving with our heads held high with a lot of pride for the organization and what the organization has been able to accomplish in a difficult, difficult time."

Before they bid farewell to their co-presidency, they will celebrate Saturday night at the 33rd PGA Awards in Los Angeles. The untelevised show gives awards to producers of films (nominees include "The Power of the Dog," "CODA" and "Dune") and television shows (from "Ted Lasso" to "Squid Game"). And they'll also be honoring the likes of George Lucas, Kathleen Kennedy, Issa Rae, "Dune" producer Mary Parent, Greg Berlanti and Rita Moreno.

Both women were already trailblazers in their industry before taking the job with



Co-presidents of the Producers Guild of America Lucy Fisher, left, and Gail Berman arrive at the 2020 Producers Guild Awards in Los Angeles on Jan. 18, 2020.

Associated Press

the guild. Fisher has been a studio executive for over 40 years, overseeing films like "The Goonies" and "The Fugitive" at Warner Bros., and "Men in Black," "Jerry Maguire" and "My Best Friend's Wedding" as vice chairman of Sony Pictures. Berman, meanwhile, made her name in television as an executive producer of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and an executive at Fox, overseeing the development and scheduling of shows like "American Idol" and "Arrested Development." During their tenure at the Producers Guild, they led efforts to combat sexual harassment in their business, worked to diversify their membership and provide mentorship for underrepresented groups at various career stages and encouraged greener productions. When the pandemic hit and production came to a standstill, Berman and Fisher helped establish a relief fund for members, transitioned community events to virtual settings

and helped form safety protocols when production was able to start again.

When people started getting back to work, PGA members would gather on Zoom to share information, give advice and ask for it too. The community spirit was unprecedented and shone a spotlight on a job that often only gets noticed when things go wrong.

"In the midst of all the horrors of the last year, producers prevailed," Fisher said. "Producers are the unsung heroes and don't often get the recognition. Our job is to be sometimes invisible and push everybody else forward and make a working machine, which we try to do. And obviously the director is at the helm, but I think it's been a good time for producers to be able to stand tall and for the world to respect what's been accomplished because it could have been that there was no business. And that didn't happen."

They also helped blur and level out old divisions between television and movie producers within the guild. Berman's involvement, Fisher said, was key to that since there had never been a high-powered television producer in the president role. Now, they have the highest number of paying members they've ever had: 8,400 people. □

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24/7

U.S. adult smoking rate fell during first year of pandemic



A man with a protective mask smokes a cigarette while waiting for a bus in Detroit, Wednesday, April 8, 2020.

Associated Press

By **MIKE STOBBE**
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The first year of the COVID-19 pandemic saw more Americans drinking heavily or using illicit drugs — but apparently not smoking. U.S. cigarette smoking dropped to a new all-time low in 2020, with 1 in 8 adults saying they were current smokers, according to survey data released Thursday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Adult e-cigarette use also dropped, the CDC reported.

CDC officials credited public health campaigns and policies for the decline, but outside experts said tobacco company price hikes and pandemic lifestyle changes likely played roles. "People who were mainly social smokers just didn't have that going on any more," said Megan Rob-

erts, an Ohio State University researcher focused on tobacco product use among young adults and adolescents.

What's more, parents who suddenly were home with their kids full-time may have cut back. And some people may have quit following reports that smokers were more likely to develop severe illness after a coronavirus infection, Roberts added.

The CDC report, based on a survey of more than 31,000 U.S. adults, found that 19% of Americans used at least one tobacco product in 2020, down from about 21% in 2019.

Use of cigars, smokeless tobacco and pipes was flat. Current use of electronic cigarettes dropped to 3.7%, down from 4.5% the year before.

Cigarettes were the most commonly used tobacco

product, with 12.5% of adults using them, down from 14%.

Health officials have long considered cigarette smoking — a risk factor for lung cancer, heart disease and stroke — to be the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.

In 1965, 42% of U.S. adults were smokers.

The rate has been gradually dropping for decades for a number of reasons, in-

cluding taxes and smoking bans in workplaces and restaurants. But a big part of the recent decline has to be recent price hikes, some experts said. □

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2 Bed Garden view \$6,000

3 Bed Ocean view \$13,000

Marriott Aruba Ocean Club

PLATINUM SEASON

2 Bed Oceanfront \$31,000

2 Bed Ocean view \$18,500

1 Bed ocean front \$17,500

1 Bed ocean View \$12,000

GOLD SEASON

2 Bed Oceanfront \$14,000

2 Bed Ocean view \$9,500

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1 Bed ocean View \$6,500

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One \$hining Moment: Players can cash in on NCAA success

By **RALPH D. RUSSO**

AP College Sports Writer

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — This March Madness, basketball players can monetize their shining moments.

The NCAA lifted its ban last summer on athletes earning money off their name, image and likeness. Since then, all kinds of business opportunities have sprung up from modest online endorsement deals to national sponsorship campaigns to booster-funded collectives that can pay athletes thousands of dollars.

The NCAA Tournament is a chance for new stars to emerge, such as New Mexico State's Teddy Allen.

Allen scored 37 points in an upset over UConn on Thursday, flexing, dancing and waving goodbye to the Huskies fans.

By Friday night, there were T-shirts and hooded sweatshirts available for purchase online with a graphic of Allen, the words "BYE BYE" and the score and date of the Aggies' first NCAA Tournament victory since 1993. And by late Saturday night, Teddy Buckets and the Aggies were done, eliminated by Arkansas 53-48, with Allen held to 12 points.

"Everyone understands how crucial it is to really capitalize on the moment in the moment. As this is happening. As it's the talk of the town. As it's trending on Twitter. That's the time to really make a strong post," said Hunter Pomerantz,



New Mexico State guard Teddy Allen reacts during the second half of the team's college basketball game against Connecticut in the first round of the NCAA men's tournament Thursday, March 17, 2022, in Buffalo, N.Y.

co-founder of The Players Trunk, an online merchandise store for college athletes to sell their gear and memorabilia.

Pomerantz, a former student-manager for the Syracuse basketball team, said The Players Trunk reaches out to athletes and offers them a contract to make a cut of the sales of the apparel. He declined to say what percentage goes to the players.

The shirts sell for \$29.99 and the sweatshirts go for between \$49.99 and \$59.99. Pomerantz said the contract covers only sales of the gear and all they ask of the athletes is to promote the merchandise on their

social media accounts. Even before the tournament began, The Players Trunk started making money on March Madness. The company produced shirts and hoodies for Wisconsin guard Chucky Hepburn, whose bank shot in the final seconds against Purdue sealed the Big Ten regular-season title for the Badgers, and Chattanooga's David Jean-Baptiste, who sent the Mocs to the NCAA Tournament with a long buzzer-beater in the Southern Conference championship game. Selling merch is just the tip of the earning potential for March's shooting stars. Jim Cavale, CEO of INFLCR,

a company that works with thousands of college teams and athletes on a range of NIL programs, said there is a potentially lucrative market for March Madness related NFTs and digital collectibles. But that takes planning and coordination and the current state of the NIL market is not set up to allow athletes to efficiently take advantage. The NCAA does not have uniformed, detailed rules governing NIL compensation. The association has instructed its member schools to follow state laws where applicable or to create their own rules in states without legislation.

Many athletes are not permitted to use their schools' marks and logos in their NIL activities. In some cases, they can't work on NIL deals while representing the school.

The Players Trunk gear with Allen's image makes no reference to New Mexico State, but it does use the colors of the Aggies basketball uniforms.

Also, licensing agreements between the NCAA and media rights holders CBS Sports and Turner put restrictions on what athletes can use to create content. Even if the content can clear legal hurdles, it takes quick work and insight to capitalize on newfound fame.

"You still have to be knowledgeable enough and take enough initiative or have help in being knowledgeable and taking enough initiative to make the most of that new value," Cavale said.

This first March Madness with NIL is likely to set a blueprint for schools and athletes to better position themselves for sudden stardom in years to come.

"This will be the last year that kids aren't fully ready for it," Blake Lawrence, the CEO of Opendorse, another company that works with schools and athletes to manage NIL activities. Lawrence said the muddled nature of current NIL rules and regulations is holding back the market. □



Iga Swiatek, of Poland, reacts after winning the women's singles finals over Maria Sakkari, of Greece, at the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament Sunday, March 20, 2022, in Indian Wells, Calif.

Associated Press

By **BETH HARRIS**

AP Sports Writer

INDIAN WELLS, Calif. (AP) —

Iga Swiatek defeated Maria Sakkari 6-4, 6-1 Sunday in an error-filled final to win

Swiatek beats Sakkari to win Indian Wells, No. 2 ranking

the BNP Paribas Open. Swiatek will rise from fourth to a career-best No. 2 in the world in Monday's WTA Tour rankings, trailing top-ranked Ash Barty, who skipped Indian Wells. Sakkari will move from sixth to No. 3, the rising Greek star's highest ranking yet. Swiatek lost each of the first three times she played Sakkari, all last year. Last month, the 20-year-old Polish player beat Sakkari in the semifinals at Doha and went on to win the title.

Now, Swiatek has five career titles, including the 2020 French Open. Her new ranking equals the highest ever by a Polish player, matching Agnieszka Radwanska, who also reached No. 2. Gusty winds affected serves and shots by both players, who had seven double faults each. There were seven service breaks in the first set alone, with Swiatek holding twice. Sakkari held once to tie the set, 4-all. Swiatek won the next game

to go up 5-4. Sakkari led 40-30 on her serve, but a double fault gave Swiatek her third break point, and she cashed in on Sakkari's netted backhand to take the set.

Swiatek broke twice in the second set for a 5-1 lead. She served out the match, winning on a forehand in the corner of the baseline. Swiatek earned \$1.2 million and improved her record to a WTA Tour-leading 20-3 this year, including 11 matches in a row. □

Deshaun Watson trade done, Browns defend decision to add QB

By **TOM WITHERS**
AP Sports Writer

Deshaun Watson's complicated past didn't dissuade the Cleveland Browns from betting on the quarterback's future.

He is on Cleveland's roster, and at this point that is the only certainty with the talented yet controversial QB. Watson's stunning trade to the Browns became official Sunday, capping a whirlwind few days during in which the three-time Pro Bowler — accused by 22 women of sexual harassment or assault — agreed to come to Cleveland after initially telling the team he wouldn't.

The Browns are taking heat for bringing in Watson with his legal baggage, but the team feels comfortable with its decision.

"We spent a tremendous amount of time exploring and investigating the opportunity to trade for Deshaun Watson," Browns owners Dee and Jimmy Haslam said in a team news release. "We are acutely aware and empathetic to the highly personal sentiments expressed about this decision. Our team's comprehensive evaluation process was of utmost importance due to the sensitive nature of his situation and the complex factors involved."

"We also understand there are still some legal proceedings that are ongoing and we will respect due process."

Desperate to win, the Browns have gone all in for Watson, sending first-round picks the next three seasons to Houston along with a 2023 third-rounder and 2024 fourth-rounder. The Texans will part with Watson and a 2024 fifth-round pick.

Cleveland is also giving Watson, who is still facing civil lawsuits, public scorn and possible NFL discipline, a fully guaranteed \$230 million contract.

Last week, the Haslams flew to Houston with general manager Andrew Berry and coach Kevin Stefanski and met with Watson to discuss his situation and

future. The 26-year-old was also courted by Atlanta, Carolina and New Orleans. The Browns came away satisfied with Watson's character.

"He was humble, sincere and candid," the Haslams said. "In our conversations, Deshaun detailed his commitment to leading our team; he understands and embraces the hard work needed to build his name both in the community and on the field. ... We are confident in Deshaun and excited about moving forward with him as our quarterback and supporting his genuine and determined efforts."

It's still not known when Watson will be in Cleveland, where fans have been debating the trade

for days. The Browns are still working on plans for a possible news conference.

Now that the trade is complete, Watson and the Browns are facing tough questions about their new partnership.

For Watson, Cleveland represents a fresh start.

For the Browns, he brings hope along with criticism.

While they become an instant possible Super Bowl contender following another disappointing season, the Browns are also being condemned for taking a player with ongoing legal issues. Nearly two dozen female massage therapists have alleged he assaulted them during rehab sessions. A grand jury in Texas recently declined to indict Watson on criminal charges,



Texans quarterback Deshaun Watson (4) practices with the team during NFL football practice, Aug. 2, 2021, in Houston. Watson's complicated past didn't dissuade the Cleveland Browns from betting on the quarterback's future.

Associated Press

es, but the civil cases are pending — as is his return to the field.

Watson may face disciplinary action by the NFL, which is conducting an in-

dependent investigation about his behavior. Based on precedent, the league could suspend him multiple games for violating its personal conduct policy. □

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Palm Beach – When you think of a restaurant that pleases the needs of a whole family or a large group of people with all different tastes? Think Water's Edge Restaurant. Located at the shore of Aruba's most wonderful beach, The Eagle Beach Aruba. Water's Edge Restaurant is guaranteed to serve you a fantastic magical night to remember. Whether you prefer to enjoy the view from indoors air conditioned comfort, outdoors in the soft tropical breeze or under a palapa with your toes in the sand. This spectacular restaurant offers the best ocean view sunset or sky full of stars dinner while the crispy Caribbean night wind caresses your face and plays with your hair.

From the minute you arrive there will be a great staff welcoming you with the most contagious smiles and warmth. The intense menu with a great variety of appetizers, main courses and delicious desserts will not disappoint. Seafood, Steaks and international favorites. All on one menu specially made just for you.

Culinary Voyage

Start your gastronomic journey with a scrumptious appetizer such as the Maryland Crab Cakes, maybe the Crispy Calamari or the mouthwatering

creamy Garlic Tarragon Shrimp. You can also opt for a classic French Onion Soup, a Lobster Bisque or the famously Water's Edge House Wedge, a crisp wedge of fresh romaine lettuce topped with homemade blue cheese dressing, diced tomatoes, chopped bacon, caramelized pecans and blue cheese crumbles, drizzled with balsamic reduction. This followed by the Chef's special of seafood such as Fresh salmon filet seasoned and grilled, topped with lemon cilantro butter and served with homemade mashed potatoes and fresh asparagus, a nice plate of Ahi Tuna or a succulent pasta dish like the Florentina Fettuccine Alfredo. Meat Lovers will have their fix with choices of a devourable 22oz. Bone-In "Tomahawk" Rib-Eye, pan seared in garlic infused oil and finished in the oven or our juicy N.Y Strip Loin, seasoned & grilled. All our steaks options are seasoned with a blend of kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Served with homemade mashed potatoes, seasoned vegetables and a choice of red wine reduction, green peppercorn demi glace, mushroom sauce, or bacon blue cheese butter. For extra sides the options are delectable. Fresh asparagus, seasonal vegetables, mashed or baked potatoes, fries or rice and beans. Combine

your personal choice with one of the most exclusive wine from the great selection of international wines to compliment your dish. Kids will enjoy every item of the specially compiled kids menu and there are also optional dishes for all vegans, vegetarians and gluten-free guests. To end the culinary voyage with some luscious sweetness, the desserts are wild. From a piece of coconut flan, NY cheese cake, carrot cake, chocolate brownie or our classic Tiramisu with kahlua and amaretto served with chocolate sauce and coffee jelly. Not to mention the fresh and light piece of key lime pie.

Creating memories

If you are planning a birthday dinner, here you will receive a nice bottle of champagne to take home with you to extend your experience even further whether on the beach or your own private balcony.

Live entertainment

Just about every day of the week, there is a different live entertainment by the best local artists for you to enjoy. Whether you're in a romantic mood, or more in a swinging mood, there is absolutely a night especially for you where you can combine great music with delicious cocktails mixed with concoctions. In addition, Water's Edge offers three daily Happy Hours from 12pm-1pm, 4pm-6pm and again from 9pm-10pm with all premium brands specially priced.

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Whether you join us for breakfast, lunch or dinner, Water's Edge Restaurant & Bar offers a relaxed and inspirational dining experience overlooking the beautiful Eagle Beach with spectacular ocean views. Gather with friends and family for drinks and appetizers or a night of pampering and relaxation.



Thank you to all our guests

From the bottom of our hearts, we would like to Thank all of our guests who showed us so much love and support all through 2021, and hopefully will continue to do so in 2022. What we are most grateful for is that we could get back to doing what we love, which is looking after our guests. So, thank you for every dinner, lunch, breakfast, every to-go order, every glass of wine, every birthday, anniversary and date-night that you spent with us this last year. To our new guests, Welcome! We hope you to see you back soon! ☐



"Water's Edge Restaurant is where magnificent beach views, amazing food and excellent service come together."

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For more information about the menus, entertainment and hours, please visit the website watersedge-aruba.com

